

Amendment and Response

Serial No.: 09/698,412

Confirmation No.: 5638

Filed: 27 October 2000

For: AUTOMATED RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING METHOD AND SYSTEM

Page 2 of 18

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend claims 12 and 31 as indicated below.

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the above-identified application:

1. (Original) A method of qualitative respirator fit testing, the method comprising:
providing an automated qualitative respirator fit testing system that comprises a plurality of test stations and an automated aerosol generator system in fluid communication with each of the test stations;
locating at least one test subject at one test station of the plurality of test stations; and
conducting a qualitative fit test on each test subject located at one of the test stations, wherein the qualitative fit test conducted at each of the test stations comprises:
delivering a test aerosol to the test station using the automated aerosol generator system after locating a respirator on the test subject, wherein the test subject is exposed to the test aerosol; and
receiving test feedback from the test subject at the test station after exposure to the test aerosol.

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2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising locating two or more test subjects at the plurality of test stations and conducting a qualitative fit test on each of the two or more test subjects simultaneously.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein delivering the test aerosol further comprises simultaneous delivery of the test aerosol to the two or more test subjects

Amendment and Response

Serial No.: 09/698,412

Confirmation No.: 5638

Filed: 27 October 2000

For: AUTOMATED RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING METHOD AND SYSTEM

Page 3 of 18

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the automated aerosol generator system comprises a set of independent aerosol generators, with at least one of the independent aerosol generators in fluid communication with each of the test stations.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the aerosol generator system comprises at least one aerosol generator in fluid communication with at least two of the plurality of test stations.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein providing the test aerosol further comprises delivering a selected amount of the test aerosol to each of the test subjects at predetermined intervals using the aerosol generator system.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising delivering the selected amount of the test aerosol to each of the test subjects simultaneously.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising delivering different selected amounts of the test aerosol to at least two of the test stations.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising storing the test feedback in a database.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising storing information regarding the test aerosol delivery to each of the test subjects in a database.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising monitoring each of the test stations during exposure of the test subjects to the test aerosol.

Amendment and Response

Page 4 of 18

Serial No.: 09/698,412

Confirmation No.: 5638

Filed: 27 October 2000

For: AUTOMATED RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING METHOD AND SYSTEM

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
monitoring each of the test stations during exposure of the test subject to the test aerosol to each of the test stations;
capturing at least one image of the test station during the monitoring;
storing the at least one image in a database.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising prompting the test subjects at each of the test stations to perform specified activities during exposure of the test subject to the test aerosol.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, further comprising simultaneous prompting of at least two test subjects to perform the specified activities.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13, further comprising receiving activity feedback from each of the test subjects indicating completion of the specified activities.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the qualitative fit test performed at each of the test stations further comprises:
delivering sensitivity aerosol to the test station using the automated aerosol generator system, wherein the test subject is exposed to the sensitivity aerosol; and
receiving sensitivity feedback from the test subject at the test station after exposure to the sensitivity aerosol.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising simultaneous delivery of an initial selected amount of the sensitivity aerosol to each of at least two test subjects.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising preventing delivery of the sensitivity aerosol to at least one test subject after receiving sensitivity feedback from the test subject indicating

Amendment and Response

Page 5 of 18

Serial No.: 09/698,412

Confirmation No.: 5638

Filed: 27 October 2000

For: AUTOMATED RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING METHOD AND SYSTEM

detection of the sensitivity aerosol by the test subject after delivering the initial selected amount of the sensitivity aerosol.

19. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising storing the sensitivity feedback in a database.

20. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising storing information regarding the sensitivity aerosol delivery to each of the test subjects in the database.

21. (Original) A qualitative respirator fit testing system comprising:
a plurality of test stations; and
an automated aerosol generator system in fluid communication with each of the test stations.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the automated aerosol generator system comprises a set of independent aerosol generators, wherein at least one of the independent aerosol generators is in fluid communication with each of the test stations.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein each of the aerosol generators comprises a nebulizer.

24. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the automated aerosol generator system comprises at least one aerosol generator in fluid communication with at least two of the plurality of test stations.

25. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein each of the test stations comprises a respirator fit testing hood.

Amendment and Response

Page 6 of 18

Serial No.: 09/698,412

Confirmation No.: 5638

Filed: 27 October 2000

For: AUTOMATED RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING METHOD AND SYSTEM

26. (Original) A method of remote automated respirator fit testing comprising:
providing an automated respirator fit testing system at a first location, wherein the automated respirator fit testing system comprises at least one test station and an automated aerosol generator system in fluid communication with each of the at least one test stations;
locating at least one test subject wearing a respirator at the test station of the respirator fit testing system at the first location; and
operating the automated respirator fit testing system from a remote location to perform a respirator fit test on the at least one test subject by delivering a test aerosol to the at least one test station using the automated aerosol generator system, wherein the at least one test subject is exposed to the test aerosol.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein operating the respirator fit testing system comprises receiving test feedback at the remote location from the test subject at the first location after exposure to the test aerosol.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, further comprising storing the test feedback in a database.

29. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising storing information regarding the test aerosol delivery in a database.

30. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising monitoring the at least one test station while performing the respirator fit test.

31. (Currently amended) The method of claim 26, further comprising:
monitoring the at least one test station while performing the respirator fit test;
capturing at least one image of the at least one test station during the monitoring;
storing the at least one image in a database.

Amendment and Response

Serial No.: 09/698,412

Confirmation No.: 5638

Filed: 27 October 2000

For: AUTOMATED RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING METHOD AND SYSTEM

Page 7 of 18

32. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising prompting the at least one test subject to perform specified activities while performing the respirator fit test.

33. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising receiving activity feedback from the at least one test subject indicating completion of the specified activities while performing the respirator fit test.

34. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising simultaneous prompting of at least two test subjects to perform the specified activities.

35. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising:
providing a second automated respirator fit testing system at a second location remote from the first location, wherein the second automated respirator fit testing system comprises at least one test station and an automated aerosol generator system in fluid communication with each of the at least one test stations;

locating at least one test subject wearing a respirator at the test station of the second automated respirator fit testing system at the second location; and

operating the first and second automated respirator fit testing systems from the remote location to perform a respirator fit test on the at least one test subject located at each of the first and second automated respirator fit testing systems, wherein each respirator fit test comprises delivering a test aerosol to the at least one test station using the automated aerosol generator system, wherein the at least one test subject is exposed to the test aerosol.

36. (Original) The method of claim 35, further comprising conducting respirator fit tests using the first and second automated respirator fit testing systems at the same time.

Amendment and Response

Page 8 of 18

Serial No.: 09/698,412

Confirmation No.: 5638

Filed: 27 October 2000

For: AUTOMATED RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING METHOD AND SYSTEM

37. (Previously Presented) A method of qualitative respirator fit testing, the method comprising:

 providing an automated qualitative respirator fit testing system that comprises a plurality of test stations and an automated aerosol generator system in fluid communication with each of the test stations;

 locating at least one test subject at one test station of the plurality of test stations; and

 conducting a qualitative fit test on each test subject located at one of the test stations, wherein the qualitative fit test conducted at each of the test stations comprises:

 delivering a repeatable, selected amount of test aerosol to the test station using the automated aerosol generator system after locating a respirator on the test subject, wherein the test subject is exposed to the test aerosol; and

 receiving test feedback from the test subject at the test station after exposure to the test aerosol.

38. (Previously Presented) A method of qualitative respirator fit testing, the method comprising:

 providing an automated qualitative respirator fit testing system that comprises a plurality of test stations and an automated aerosol generator system in fluid communication with each of the test stations;

 locating at least one test subject at one test station of the plurality of test stations; and

 conducting a qualitative fit test on each test subject located at one of the test stations, wherein the qualitative fit test conducted at each of the test stations comprises:

 delivering different selected amounts of test aerosol to at least two of the test stations using the automated aerosol generator system after locating a respirator on test subjects at the at least two of the test stations, wherein the test subjects are exposed to the different selected amounts of test aerosol at the same time; and

 receiving test feedback from the test subject at the test station after exposure to the test aerosol.

Amendment and Response

Page 9 of 18

Serial No.: 09/698,412

Confirmation No.: 5638

Filed: 27 October 2000

For: **AUTOMATED RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING METHOD AND SYSTEM**

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, comprising:

capturing at least one image of at least one test subject at one of the test stations during exposure of the test subject to the test aerosol; and

storing ~~the at least one image~~ in a database.